

USAID/Mongolia
ANNUAL REPORT FY 2003

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A. Program Level Narrative

Program Performance Summary:

BACKGROUND: A nominally independent appendage of the Soviet Union from 1921 until 1990, during the past ten years Mongolia has undertaken far-reaching political and economic reform. On the political front, the country conducted a series of free and fair elections; avoided the “great leader” syndrome that has stymied democracy in other parts of the world; and accepted differing views among its citizenry, a trait that is largely absent elsewhere in Central Asia. Simultaneously, Mongolia transitioned from a state-owned to a market economy. The private sector now accounts for more than 70 percent of Mongolia's GDP, an impressive turn-around given that it accounted for virtually nothing at the beginning of the 1990s. The challenge now is to consolidate these still fragile changes and then move them to the next highest level.

Though isolated for many centuries, Mongolia's strategic importance is primarily due to its geographic location between two nuclear-armed world powers, China and Russia. Mongolia's southern border with China extends for 2,800 miles, China's single longest border with any country. Mongolia's northern border with Russia extends for another 1,900 miles. North Korea is 500 miles to the east, Kazakstan 25 miles to the west. From a political and economic standpoint, a stable Mongolia contributes greatly to stability across the region.

Mongolia's vast territory, small population and distance from world markets represent perhaps its greatest development challenge. The country is larger than Britain, France, Italy and Germany combined. Yet these countries together have a population of approximately 250 million people, exceeding Mongolia's population of 2.5 million by a hundred fold. Air travel to Mongolia is costly and domestic air links are sporadic. A single north-south rail line runs through the middle of the country. With less than 1,000 miles of paved road, travel in Mongolia involves long journeys by jeep on dirt tracks that run across the country's formidable network of deserts, steppes and mountains. The fact that most international trade must be routed through ports in Russia or China adds to the cost. These factors also make it more difficult for Mongolia to compete in the global marketplace.

Officials estimate a per capita income of around \$450 a year, a figure that does not fully capture the important contributions made by Mongolia's vibrant “underground” economy fueled partly by the growing number of Mongolians who live and work abroad. External debt is approaching \$1 billion, equivalent to the country's annual GDP. Almost all the debt is on concessional terms from foreign donors, primarily the Asian Development Bank and Japan. These loans will start coming due in the next five years. The resulting debt burden will be substantial unless economic growth, stagnant in recent years, begins to increase. The East Asian economic downturn, combined with several harsh winters, further cloud Mongolia's development prospects.

Major social indicators related to education and health remain high. For example, the literacy rate by some estimates exceeds 90 percent. In contrast to most developing countries, Mongolian females are much more likely than their male counterparts to graduate from high school. At a university level, more than two-thirds of all students are women. More than 95 percent of all Mongolian children are vaccinated. Life expectancy has been placed at 67 and under five mortality rates are estimated at around 73 per 1,000. Approximately 6.2 percent of the country's GDP is devoted to health care. In these and other areas, Mongolia out-performs most other countries at a comparable stage of development. At the same time, poverty rates exceed 30 percent. Continued economic stagnation in the countryside means that more Mongolians are migrating to Ulaanbaatar, the country's capital and only large city. The population of Ulaanbaatar is now approaching one million, leading some observers to describe it as “the most rapidly growing urban center in Asia.”

A continued commitment to economic and political reform, an educated population, an abundance of mineral resources-all combine to provide this generation of Mongolians with a unique opportunity to re-emerge after centuries of isolation and once again participate on the world stage. China's recent

accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Russia's increasing involvement in the world economy should strengthen Mongolia's prospects still further.

Yet much remains to be done to further Mongolia's political and economic development. In particular, the series of reform-oriented laws passed by parliament not only need to be effectively implemented; they also must become part of a "living culture" that builds on the strengths of a market economy while adhering to the norms and practices of a real democracy. In addition, Mongolia must move aggressively to expand transparency, root out corruption, reform the court system and streamline commercial rules and regulations if it wants to encourage local entrepreneurs and attract much needed foreign investment. Finally, the protection of Mongolia's vast but fragile environment poses an important but critical challenge to sustainable development, a challenge that will grow more acute in the years ahead.

U.S. INTERESTS AND GOALS: The major U.S. interest is that Mongolia remains stable in this potentially volatile region of the world. Mongolia anchors one end of Central Asia, even as Afghanistan anchors the other. Proximity to Russia, China, Korea and Kazakhstan further underscores its strategic importance. Viewed from this perspective, a stable, independent and democratic Mongolia can play an important role supporting the U.S. global campaign against terrorism and promoting a peaceful and prosperous Asia. In addition, a successful Mongolia provides a potent example to other countries on how to launch an effective political and economic reform process simultaneously. In particular, the unusual relationship that Mongolia has with both North and South Korea positions Mongolia to make a positive and constructive contribution as a "role model" for North Korea when it eventually emerges from the isolation that it has maintained over the past many decades.

The two USAID Strategic Objectives (SOs) in Mongolia--building a sustainable market-based economy and strengthening a stable democracy--mutually re-enforce and build on each other. Successful attainment of both SOs will go a long way toward ensuring stability within Mongolia and beyond. Specific activities focus on transparency, judicial reform, privatization, business development and financial restructuring. A concerted effort is also underway to disseminate information and inform a broad spectrum of Mongolians about issues that are vital to the country's future. These programs are in turn coordinated with other elements of the Embassy country team, including the Economic and Public Affairs sections

DONOR RELATIONS: As a relatively small program in a country that faces big challenges, USAID/Mongolia attempts to lead the donor community by example. We emphasize a pragmatic, flexible approach to problems. We focus on achieving results. And we place a high premium on promoting cooperation among other donors and among our various implementing partners. Our goal is to create synergy among different activities and have impact in ways that go far beyond the actual size of our USAID program in Mongolia.

Donor coordination has improved over the past year. At the July Consultative Group (CG) meetings in Ulaanbaatar, all donors worked together to prepare a joint statement that expressed concern over the pace of reform and highlighted corruption as a growing concern. A number of sector-specific donor consultations have also been held, including in energy and in rural development. Most recently, the Embassies of the United States and Japan have worked with USAID and local Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) representatives to hold a series of bilateral consultations aimed at improving coordination on Mongolian aid issues.

The close working relationship between USAID and the German aid agency (GTZ) provides an especially outstanding example of donor cooperation over the last year. USAID and GTZ together provide the lion's share of judicial reform assistance to Mongolia. Contractors supported by both donor agencies not only share adjoining offices in the Ministry of Justice; they worked together to produce an extensive summer training program involving virtually every judge in the country. The training effort helped pave the way for the implementation of new civil and criminal codes. It has also been lauded as a good example of what can happen when donor agencies work hard at working together.

Cooperation with GTZ extends to other areas. For example, USAID's Competitiveness Initiative joined forces with a GTZ enterprise development project to develop tourism curriculums, implement training programs and coordinate overseas marketing efforts, especially related to travel fairs. Our support to the fledgling Mongolian Tourism Association (MTA) is to some extent mirrored by GTZ involvement with the Institute for Tourism Management (ITM). Together, these efforts build skills and help strengthen Mongolia's competitiveness in tourism.

The merger of the USAID-support Goviin Ekhlel rural finance program with the UNDP-supported Golden Fund for Development is another example of effective donor coordination in Mongolia. This resulted in the establishment of XacBank in January 2002 as a significant supporter of small and medium sized business in Mongolia. Reportedly, the joint establishment of XacBank is the first time anywhere that USAID and UNDP have merged micro finance programs to form a new commercial bank.

USAID also works closely with other donors throughout the portfolio as part of its broader effort to increase impact and achieve results. For example, the USAID-supported Gobi Initiative worked with the Asian Development Bank to dig wells in the countryside. Similarly, the USAID-funded management contract with Agricultural Bank is closely coordinated with other donors interested in banking reform, including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Finally, the USAID-funded privatization program helped fund an assessment of the national airline (MIAT) in anticipation of a forthcoming management contract funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), a concept that was based in large part on the Agricultural Bank experience.

CHALLENGES: Effecting meaningful change in Mongolia is becoming more difficult, in part because of the challenges presented by implementation in an environment with limited prior exposure to the workings of a market economy. The private sector share of Mongolia's economy will continue to rise, but at a slower pace. Contrary to Mongolian expectations, there is not huge international interest in buying the country's major remaining state-owned companies, including banks, cashmere factories, the oil distribution network and the national airline.

The economic downturn in East Asia, combined with lower world prices for two of Mongolia's major exports (copper and cashmere), reduce export earnings at a time when the country's imports are increasing exponentially. In addition, a continuing decline in Mongolia's agricultural sector-fueled in part by summer drought and a series of difficult winters-adversely affects Mongolia's overall growth figures. The result is economic stagnation despite growth in key sectors such as construction and manufacturing. While Mongolia hopes to finally break this negative cycle in 2003, formidable challenges still lie ahead.

What happens in the country's judiciary and in the executive and legislative branches of government has a direct bearing on Mongolia's economic prospects. To a certain extent, "success" appears to be measured by the passage of new laws and regulations, not their effective implementation. There are concerns that corruption, previously a relatively minor issue, is rising. At the same time, opposition political groups increasingly seek a voice in a parliamentary system that is dominated by a single political party. These developments have heightened interest in the next national elections, scheduled for summer 2004. The elections, along with the political debate that will proceed them, provide an important milestone in Mongolia's continued path toward achieving lasting political and economic development.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS: USAID achieved significant results during 2002. The Mission had an especially substantial and positive impact on the financial sector through its support for establishing XacBank, reforming Agricultural Bank and privatizing the Trade and Development Bank. We remain heavily engaged in judicial reform. We help herders and private businesses in Mongolia's neglected countryside. And we launched a pioneering new program focused on business development in the "ger districts" that surround the rapidly growing urban sections of the country.

At the same time, progress in the all-important energy sector appears to have stalled. Additionally, Mongolia continues to miss important opportunities to effectively implement announced policy reforms and streamline its commercial environment. In a global economy, countries that fail to move forward end

up falling behind. Mongolia, having achieved a well deserved reputation for its commitment to political and economic change over the last decade, now needs to ratchet its reform process up to the next level.

Private Sector Growth: Under this SO, USAID aims to transfer productive assets to private ownership; increase the efficiency of financial markets; improve the business environment; and improve natural resource management, especially in the Gobi region.

Achievements in the financial sector have already been highlighted. The continuing strength of the Agricultural Bank is a USAID success story of the highest order. The bank--which has the largest network of branch offices in the country--was bankrupt in 1999. In July 2000 USAID fielded a small management team, despite recommendations by experts from the World Bank and other international institutions that it should be closed down. By early 2001, the bank had reached the break-even point. By early 2002, it was making after tax profits of \$200,000 a month. As a result, the government issued a tender to privatize the bank in fall 2002, a process that should conclude in early 2003. USAID was also heavily involved in founding XacBank in January 2002 and in privatizing Trade and Development Bank by the end of 2002.

Elsewhere, USAID-funded contractors advised the Prime Minister's office on a range of key issues, including land laws, tax policy and energy reform. We also helped maintain the Prime Minister's web page (www.open-government.mn) which promotes transparency and provides an opportunity for Mongolians to comment on pending legislation. In the private sector, USAID orchestrated a substantial growth in the Mongolian Tourist Association (MTA) and further strengthened the country's ability to respond to new opportunities in the rapidly expanding tourism sector. We also helped establish a Fiber Promotion Board as the prospective custodian for a collective mark for Mongolian cashmere that should be introduced in 2003.

Momentum in the pioneering Gobi Initiative slowed somewhat in 2002, partly due to unexpected delays in receiving anticipated local currency from the sale of US agricultural commodities (wheat) to Mongolia. Nonetheless, this extensive rural development program covering much of western and southern Mongolia and targeting a population of 370,000 continued to have an important impact. One project highlight is the expansion in rural credit through Xacsbank that now has nearly thirty offices across the country. In addition, the Gobi Initiative substantially expanded its communications programs and extensive range of business development programs in rural Mongolia. For example, Rural Business News moved to a monthly publishing schedule. With a circulation of 100,000, it remains the most widely read periodical in the country. Radio programming--including MarketWatch, WeatherWatch and Herder from the Future--continued to have a wide audience. The Gobi Initiative also helped establish 115 new businesses, 18 new herder and business cooperatives and 7 new herder and business support associations. In addition, it implemented 94 business training programs involving 1,350 rural Mongolians, 56 percent of whom were women.

Consolidate Mongolia's Transition to Democracy: Under this SO, USAID aims to establish the foundations for an effective rural civil society and improve the effectiveness of parliament and the judiciary.

Judicial reform is slow and requires a long-term commitment to achieve lasting results. The launch of a new automated case management system in 2002 was an especially notable development. Five pilot courts participated, representing both urban and rural jurisdictions. A key feature was the introduction of public access terminals, resulting in an unprecedented increase in transparency and accountability on the status of pending court cases.

In addition, USAID cooperated with GTZ to design and implement a series of training sessions aimed at introducing judges and other members of the judiciary to the new civil and criminal codes that became effective in September 2002. Almost all of Mongolia's more than 300 judges participated. Also in connection with the new civil and criminal codes, USAID helped launch a national media campaign to educate the public about changes in Mongolia's judicial system.

Finally, the presence of three long-term advisors provides important opportunities for us to comment and shape pending judicial laws and legislation. During 2002, such advice strengthened transparency through

a new ethics code, reduced opportunities for corruption through a new law on courts, promoted greater certainty in commercial transactions through a new civil code and protected the rights of citizens accused under a new criminal code. This kind of advice provided by on-site advisors who have developed the respect and trust of their judicial counterparts does more than any number of workshops or study tours to help shape the country's legal system during a critical period in its development.

A smaller USAID-funded program focuses on parliamentary and political party development. Parliament's first ever open committee hearings were organized in October 2002 to discuss the judicial budget. This initial foray into open hearings should be expanded in 2003, providing another mechanism for promoting transparency and accountability in government.

Environmental Compliance: The environmental statement provided in the 2001 Results Review and Resource Request (R4) remains unchanged. New business development activities initiated to respond to concerns over increased rural-urban migration are very similar in scope and content to those already funded under the Gobi Initiative. As far as the Mission is aware, USAID/Mongolia's two SOs and the related activities funded under them remain in compliance with their approved Environmental Examinations.

Parenthetically, two new developments will provide further opportunity to review the Mission's adherence to environmental concerns during the coming months. First, an environmental assessment is now being prepared in conjunction with the new USAID/Mongolia strategy that will be submitted to Washington in 2003. Second, the Mission anticipates hiring a new US personal services contractor (PSC) with extensive experience as a USAID environmental officer. One of this individual's first tasks will be to review any outstanding environmental concerns as they relate to both the new strategy and the Mission's ongoing project portfolio.

Country Closeout & Graduation: Not applicable

D. Results Framework

438-001 Accelerate and Broaden Environmentally Sound Private Sector Growth

- IR 1.1 Productive assets transferred to private ownership in a transparent manner
- IR 1.2 Increased efficiency of financial markets
- IR 1.3 Improved business environment
- IR 1.4 Improved management of natural resource base for long-term sustainable use

Discussion: Development of a new strategy is now underway. The formulation of the SO is likely to remain unchanged. However, the supporting IRs may be adjusted to reflect greater emphasis on an improved enabling environment for private sector growth; more competitive sectors and firms; and greater economic opportunity for all Mongolians.

438-002 Consolidate Mongolia's Democratic Transition

- IR 2.1 Establish the foundation of an effective rural civil society
- IR 2.2 Improve the effectiveness of Parliament, political parties and the judiciary

Discussion: A new strategy development process is now underway. This will likely result in a reformulated SO, one that emphasizes improved governance and more accountable political institutions. The individual IRs are also likely to be adjusted, with one emphasizing comprehensive legal reform and a second organized around strengthened political processes. Efforts will also be made to ensure greater transparency, accountability and citizen participation.

Selected Performance Measures - Mongolia

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Indicator (all data should pertain to FY or CY 02)	OU Response	Significant Result: Description of the significant result for a strategic objective	Data Quality Factors: Information relevant to the collection of this indicator data, e.g. "this data was not collected last year because it is only collected every five years."
Pillar I: Global Development Alliance			
Did your operating unit achieve a significant result working in alliance with the private sector or NGOs?			
438-001 Accelerate and Broaden Environmentally Sound Private Sector Growth			
438-002 Consolidate Mongolia's Democratic Transition			
a. How many alliances did you implement in 2002? (list partners)			
b. How many alliances do you plan to implement in FY 2003?			
What amount of funds has been leveraged by the alliances in relationship to USAID's contribution?			
Pillar II: Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade			
USAID Objective 1: Critical, private markets expanded and strengthened			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			
438-001 Accelerate and Broaden Environmentally Sound Private Sector Growth	Yes	Significant results included privatization of Mongolia's largest commercial bank (Trade and Development Bank); turn-around of bank with largest branch network (Agricultural Bank) and establishment of innovative new micro financial institution (XacBank). Taken together, these represent a significant contribution to Mongolia's financial sector.	Qualitative assessment
USAID Objective 2: More rapid and enhanced agricultural development and food security encouraged			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			
438-001 Accelerate and Broaden Environmentally Sound Private Sector Growth			
USAID Objective 3: Access to economic opportunity for the rural and urban poor expanded and made more equitable			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			
438-001 Accelerate and Broaden Environmentally Sound Private Sector Growth	Yes	See narrative on Gobi Initiative, Agricultural Bank and XacBank. Also, USAID launched the country's first systematic business development program focused on the "ger districts" of urban Mongolia. Taken together, these programs significantly advance economic opportunity in Mongolia.	Qualitative assessment
USAID Objective 4: Access to quality basic education for under-served populations, especially for girls and women, expanded			
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?			

a. Number of children enrolled in primary schools affected by USAID basic education programs (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of children enrolled in primary schools affected by USAID basic education programs (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	

USAID Objective 5: World's environment protected by emphasizing policies and practices ensuring environmentally sound and efficient energy use, sustainable urbanization,

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

438-001 Accelerate and Broaden Environmentally Sound Private Sector Growth				
a. Hectares under Approved Management Plans (2002 actual)				
b. Hectares under Approved Management Plans (2003 target)	0			

Pillar III: Global Health

USAID Objective 1: Reducing the number of unintended pregnancies

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

Percentage of in-union women age 15-49 using, or whose partner is using, a modern method of contraception at the time of the survey. (DHS/RHS)	%			
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USAID Objective 2: Reducing infant and child mortality

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

Percentage of children age 12 months or less who have received their third dose of DPT (DHS/RHS)	Male	Female	Total	
Percentage of children age 6-59 months who had a case of diarrhea in the last two weeks and received ORT (DHS/RHS)	Male	Female	Total	
Percentage of children age 6-59 months receiving a vitamin A supplement during the last six months (DHS/RHS)	Male	Female	Total	
Were there any confirmed cases of wild-strain polio transmission in your country?				

USAID Objective 3: Reducing deaths and adverse health outcomes to women as a result of pregnancy and childbirth

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

Percentage of births attended by medically-trained personnel (DHS/RHS)	%			
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USAID Objective 4: Reducing the HIV transmission rate and the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic in developing countries

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

a. Total condom sales (2002 actual)				
b. Total condom sales (2003 target)				

National HIV Seroprevalence Rates reported annually (Source: National Sentinel Surveillance System)	%			
Number of sex partners in past year (Source: national survey/conducted every 3-5 years)per DHS or other survey)				
Median age at first sex among young men and women (age of sexual debut) ages 15-24 (Source: national survey/conducted every 3-5 years) per DHS or other survey)	Male	Female	Total	
Condom use with last non-regular partner (Source: national survey/conducted every 3-5 years)per DHS or other survey)	%			
Number of Clients provided services at STI clinics				
Number of STI clinics with USAID assistance				
Number of orphans and other vulnerable children receiving care/support				
Number of Orphans and Vulnerable Children programs with USAID assistance				
Number of community initiatives or community organizations receiving support to care for orphans and other vulnerable children				
Number of USAID-supported health facilities offering PMTCT services				
Number of women who attended PMTCT sites for a new pregnancy in the past 12 months				
Number of women with known HIV infection among those seen at PMTCT sites within the past year.				
Number of HIV-positive women attending antenatal clinics receiving a complete course of ARV therapy to prevent MTCT (UNGASS National Programme & Behavior Indicator #4)				
Number of individuals reached by community and home-based care programs in the past 12 months				
Number of USAID-assisted community and home-based care programs				
Number of clients seen at Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) centers				

Number of VCT centers with USAID assistance				
Number of HIV-infected persons receiving Anti-Retroviral (ARV) treatment				
Number of USAID-assisted ARV treatment program				
a. Number of individuals treated in STI programs (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of individuals treated in STI programs (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	
a. Is your operating unit supporting an MTCT program?				
b. Will your operating unit start an MTCT program in 2003?				
a. Number of individuals reached by community and home based care programs (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of individuals reached by community and home based care programs (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	
a. Number of orphans and vulnerable children reached (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of orphans and vulnerable children reached (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	
a. Number of individuals reached by antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programs (2002 actual)	Male	Female	Total	
b. Number of individuals reached by antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programs (2003 target)	Male	Female	Total	
USAID Objective 5: Reducing the threat of infectious diseases of major public health importance				
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?				
a. Number of insecticide impregnated bed-nets sold (Malaria) (2002 actual)				
b. Number of insecticide impregnated bed-nets sold (Malaria) (2003 target)				
a. Proportion of districts implementing the DOTS Tuberculosis strategy (2002 actual)	%			
b. Proportion of districts implementing the DOTS Tuberculosis strategy (2003 target)	%			
Pillar III: Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance				
USAID Objective 1: Strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights				
Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?				

438-002 Consolidate Mongolia's Democratic Transition	Yes			Shaped and helped implement a dramatically changed legal environment, including introduction of new civil and criminal codes. The launch of a new automated case management system in selected court rooms in 2002 was another notable development.	Qualitative assessment
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USAID Objective 2: Encourage credible and competitive political processes

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

438-002 Consolidate Mongolia's Democratic Transition	No		
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USAID Objective 3: Promote the development of politically active civil society

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

438-001 Accelerate and Broaden Environmentally Sound Private Sector Growth	No		
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USAID Objective 4: Encourage more transparent and accountable government institutions

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

438-002 Consolidate Mongolia's Democratic Transition	No		
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USAID Objective 5: Mitigate conflict

Did your program in a pre-conflict situation achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

Did your program in a post-conflict situation achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

Number of refugees and internally displaced persons assisted by USAID	Male	Female	Total	
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USAID Objective 6: Provide humanitarian relief

Did your program achieve a significant result in the past year that is likely to contribute to this objective?

Number of beneficiaries				
Crude mortality rates	%			
Child malnutrition rates	%			
Did you provide support to torture survivors this year, even as part of a larger effort?				
Number of beneficiaries (adults age 15 and over)	Male	Female	Total	
Number of beneficiaries (children under age 15)	Male	Female	Total	